

*A present Remembrance of God in the Days
of Youth Explained and Enforced.*

IN A
SERMON
TO
YOUNG PEOPLE

On ECCLES. XII. 1.

Preached in *NEW BROADSTREET*,
December the 25th 1729.

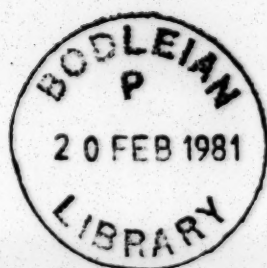
By *JOHN GUTSE.*

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that heard it.

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ECCLES. XII. 1.

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth—.

IT is now a year ago since I gave you a discourse on the last verse but one of the foregoing chapter, when some notice was taken of the general design of this book, and a more particular account was given of several verses toward the close of that chapter, as falling in with that Design. And in hopes that it may, by the blessing of God, answer some valuable ends to lead your thoughts on to the passage now read, I have fixed upon it for the subject of our present meditations.

These words may be considered as an application of the preceding discourse about the vanity of all things in this world, and of young minds in their regards to it. It is a very deceiving world in the present state of things; and young people are very apt to deceive themselves in their pursuits after it, in their expectations from it, and in their indulgencies of themselves in it. As a remedy against this epidemical and dangerous disease, the wise man calls upon them to *remember now their creator in the days of their youth.*

In these words we have,

1. A distinguishing appellation of God.
Thy creator.

This is a title that belongs to none but the only true God ; it is descriptive of him, and distinguishes him from all creatures, and from all other gods, which indeed are no gods ;

Jer. x. 11. *for the gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.* 'Tis the true and living God that created us. He originally formed us, and all things else out of nothing by the word of his power. He now gives us our several beings in the ordinary course of nature ; and in an immediate manner is the *God of the spirits of all flesh*, and the *father of our spirits* : Hence Solomon, speaking of death a little after our text, says,

Num. xxvii. 16. *Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was : and the spirit shall return unto God who*

Heb. xii. 9. *gave it.*

Eccl. xii. 7. *He made us, and not we our selves ; and he is our only Creator, none concurred*

Pf. c. 2. *with him in that work : Have we not all one father ? bath not one God created us ?* The God that created us is but one ; and yet it is a common observation of the learned, that the *hebrew* word used in our text is in the plural number, *thy Creators*, to intimate that the creating God includes more persons than one. In like manner it is said, *Where is God my makers ?* The same sort of phraseology is used

Job xxxv. 10. *in*

in several other places*. The Godhead is one, but the Persons in the Godhead are more than one: They in a sort of common consult for joint operation, said, *Let us make man* ; Gen. i. 26. and Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are spoken of as the makers of man, and of all created beings. Of the Father it is said, *Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created* : Of the Son it is said, *Thou Lord in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth ; and the heavens are the works of thine hands. And all things were created by him and for him.* And of the Holy Ghost, *Elibu said, The spirit of God hath made me.* And he moved upon the face of the waters in the first creation of all things. The Father created us by the Son, and the Father and Son by the Spirit: The creating power was common to them all, and this power was but one: These were our Creators, and these are the one God that made us. We have,

2. The duty enjoined with reference to God. *Remember thy Creator.*

Let the thoughts of God be often in thy mind, that whoever you are a stranger to, you may not be a stranger unto him: Remember him according to the various notices

* Psal. cxlix. 2. Isa. xlv. 2. and liv. 5. And vid. Glass. Gram. Sac. p. 392—397.

he hath given you of himself by his works, or by his word, for all the great and happy purposes for which he hath made himself known.

'Tis not barely remembering God, *as* the Creator; but remembering the true God, who is the Creator, and who just before had been spoken of under the character of a Judge, that Rom.xv.4, our text calls us to. And, as *what was written aforetime was written for our learning*, in a way that may be best accommodated to the circumstances of our case: so we, who live under the advantages of a gospel-revelation, should look upon such a passage as a call to us, to remember God according to the discoveries he hath made of himself in that revelation; to remember him like christians, and not barely like *Jews*; and to remember him like persons, that consider him in the light of gospel-revelation thro' Jesus Christ as the God of all grace, and not only as the God of nature. We have,

3. The time or season advised to for the discharge of this duty. *Now, in the days of thy youth.*

Persons past their youth are not excluded from the duty: *Now* is the time, and it may be the only time for it; be your age what it will, *remember now thy Creator*. But it is peculiarly enforced upon young people, that they

they should remember him in the morning of their life, in the flower of their days ; remember him *now in the days of thy youth*. From this explication of the words, we may take the following doctrinal proposition for the subject of further discourse.

Doct. That it is the duty of all, and particularly of young people, to remember God now, without delay, according to the discoveries he hath made of himself to us.

In discoursing on this, we may, as God shall help us,

- I. *Enquire what it is to remember God, according to the discoveries he hath made of himself to us.*
- II. *Enter into some considerations, which our text and context may suggest, to enforce this remembrance of him now, and particularly on young people.*

The last of these general heads will be all the application I shall make of the first.

- I. *Enquire what it is to remember God, according to the discoveries he hath made of himself to us.*

There is a twofold remembrance ; one that is merely *historical*, and the other *practical* : The first of these is only a calling to mind
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something that we have formerly seen, heard of, known, or believed, without any improvement of it, or reflection upon it to our own advantage. Thus we remember many persons and things, as occasions offer, without any farther concern about them.

Pf. lxxviii.
35—37.

In this manner *Israel remembred that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer. Nevertheless, they did flatter him with their mouths, and they lyed unto him with their tongues. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.* And thus we may remember many things, that we have known and heard of God, without any real advantage by it.

An historical remembrance of God is included in our text, but is not the chief thing intended by it ; for one may thus remember him to his own confusion, and perish in the remembrance with double aggravation : Such a remembrance the devils and damned will have of him for ever in hell. But a *practical* remembrance of him is principally intended in this, and other places of scripture that speak of remembering him, or the things that relate unto him : And this remembrance is such a calling of him to mind as affects the heart ; and it is attended with such serious reflections, and such lively impressions, as have a good influence upon us, suitable to the knowledge he has given us of himself, suitable to the present thoughts of our souls
about

about him with reference to ourselves, and suitable to the nature of the things that are called to remembrance concerning him. Such a remembrance *Peter* had of Christ, and of what he had said, when *he went out, and wept bitterly.* Mat. xxvi.
75.

This remembrance, when it has God or Christ for its object, is sometimes put for the whole of religion. As when the psalmist says of Christ, *I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations;* and the church Psal. xlv.
17. says of God, *The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.* But Isa. xxvi.
8. to be a little more particular, a remembrance of God takes in, among others, the following things.

1. *It includes a knowledge of God, and of his mind and will in his word.*

Thus the apostle *Peter* speaks of *putting us in remembrance of the things we know.* 2 Pet. i.
12. Without some knowledge of God, our minds cannot reflect upon him; an unknown object, as far as it is unknown, can't come into our remembrance. And without an acquaintance with God in those revelations that most nearly relate to himself and to us, we cannot remember him to our own souls advantage. In order to this remembrance of him, we must know something of his greatness and his goodness, of his holiness and

B justice,

justice, of his wisdom and power, of his right to us and dominion over us, as our Creator and Lord of all ; of our obligations to him, and revolt from him ; of his infinite sufficiency to supply all our wants ; and of his nearness to us, to uphold and influence, guide and govern us, to observe us with approbation or resentment, and to save or destroy us. We must know something of God as he has revealed himself in the oeconomy of salvation, relating to the gracious purposes and provisions of the Father, the redemption of the Son, and the application of the Spirit. We must know something of the counsels of God's wisdom and method of his grace, as to the way wherein we may hope to be restored to his favour and image, to be accepted of him, to glorify him, and to be brought to all blessedness in a conformity to him and enjoyment of him. In a word, we can't remember God aright, to saving purposes, unless we know him in Christ, or according to the gracious discoveries he hath made of himself thro' him by the gospel, and by his spirit in our hearts according to that gospel.

To know him as an absolute God, without a mediator, will be our endless confusion ; for in that consideration of him he is a consuming fire to sinners. But to know him in Christ, as appeased and satisfied by his blood and righteousness, and rendered propitious to us thro' him, is no less than *life eternal,*

nal. Here we see all the perfections of God, in their unclouded and exalted, harmonious and inviting beauties, looking with a favourable aspect towards us; here we see how his justice is satisfied, and the riches of his glorious grace are advanced, and how every other attribute shines with honour, in the salvation of every sinner that comes to him thro' the redeemer. Here our souls may remember him, and not be troubled at the thoughts of him; here we may converse with him in peace, and may behold his glory thro' an incarnate Saviour, in the light of his word and spirit, without confusion, and to the richest advantage: Hence says the apostle, *We all with open face* ^{2 Cor. iii.} *beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,* ^{18. and} *are changed into the same image, from glory to* ^{iv. 6.} *glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord.* And, *God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.*

This knowledge of God in Christ don't lie in empty notions, or bare speculation, but in a heart-acquaintance with him: Accordingly he has promised to *give his people an heart to* ^{Jer. xxiv.} *know him.* And the apostle, speaking of ^{7.} true believers, says, *The son of God is come,* ^{1 John v.} *and hath given us an understanding, that* ^{20.} *we may know him that is true: and we are in him that is true, even in his son Jesus Christ.* 'Tis not enough to hear of Christ,

and to take up notions of God, and of the truths of the gospel, with respect to the way of salvation thro' him ; but if that knowledge is effectual, and our reflections upon it are advantageous to our own salvation, it must reach our hearts. *The eyes of our understandings must be enlightned, that we may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints ; and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, &c.*

Eph. i. 18,
19, 20.

2. *It includes frequent meditations on him.*

Thus it is used by the psalmist, when he speaks of *remembering God upon his bed, and meditating on him in the night-watches.* God, and particularly God in Christ, according to the gospel-revelation of him, is the center of our happiness, and shou'd be the center of our thoughts and meditations ; thither they shou'd run upon all occasions, and there they shou'd dwell with a fixed abode. We shou'd study his law and his gospel, and often reflect upon the methods of his providence and grace. Wherever we are, and whatever we engage in, we shou'd remember that we are in the view and sight of God, whose eye constantly observes all our thoughts and ways.

Psal. lxi.
6.

In every duty we shou'd consider him as worthy of our best, as jealous for his own glory, as graciously ready to accept us and our services in Christ, and as near at hand to observe, assist, and own us. In every temptation and affliction, we shou'd think upon him, as ordering all things concerning us, as able and willing to succour and relieve us, and to make them work together for our good. In all enjoyments of creature-comforts, we shou'd consider him as the original, bounteous benefactor, and remember that here is not our rest, but that our only satisfying portion is in him. And in the whole conduct of life, we shou'd often think of him as our sovereign and judge, as our guide and strength, as the all-comprehending good ; and as our ultimate end, that we may be always safe and happy, and he in all things may be glorified thro' his Son.

Thus we shou'd *set the Lord always before us*, and consider him as *at our right hand, that we may not be moved*, as David did. Our thoughts shou'd fix upon him, upon what he is in himself, upon what he is in Christ, upon what a terrible God he is to sinners out of Christ, upon what a kind and gracious God he is, and has promised to be to the true believer in him, and upon the various obligations we are under

Psal. xvi.
8.

under to him, and the high expectations we may have from him thro' a redeemer. Here is room for our thoughts to enlarge and improve in their recollections with the utmost advantage.

3. *It includes faith, and trust in God thro' Christ.*

Thus it is used for trust or dependance
 Psal. xx. 7. by the psalmist, *Some trust in chariots, and some in horses ; but we will remember, i. e. trust in, the name of the Lord our God.*
 Psal. ix. 10. Accordingly he says at another time, *They that know thy name will put their trust in thee ; for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.* That knowledge and remembrance of God, that don't bring over the heart to approve of him, and to trust in him, is but an empty notion, and will aggravate our sin instead of saving our souls.

Doth sin press hard upon the conscience, and stare us in the face, that we know not how to bear the thoughts of appearing before God in judgment ? We shou'd remember, *that there is forgiveness with him that he may be feared, and that with him there is plenteous redemption ;* and shou'd betake ourselves to his grace in Christ for pardon and salvation. Are our souls cast
 down

down within us? we shou'd remember the Lord for our relief, with humble confidence in him, according to the gracious discoveries he has made of himself to us, as *David* did, saying, *Why art thou* Psal. xlii. *cast down, O my soul? and why art thou* 5. 6. *disquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance. O my God, my soul is cast down within me; therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, &c.*

Whatever sollicitations we may feel unto sin, whatsoever fears and discouragements we may be under in ourselves, and whatever difficult duties we are called to, we shou'd remember Christ's *grace is sufficient for us, and his strength is made perfect in weakness*; and shou'd depend on him for seasonable help. Whatsoever distresses may befall us, and whatsoever disappointments we may meet with, we shou'd remember *the name of the Lord is a strong tower, and thither the righteous run, and are safe*. We shou'd cast our burdens upon him, that he may sustain us; and cast our cares on him, as one that careth for us.

2 Cor. xii:
9.
Prov. xviii.
10.
Psal. lv.
22.
1 Pet. v. 7.

4. *It includes delight and pleasure in him.*

In this sense the expression is used by the church, saying, *We will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love* Cant. i. 4.
more

Pfal. civ.
34. and
cxxxix. 17,
18.

more than wine. And thus David remembered God, saying, *My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord.* And how precious are thy thoughts to me, O God? how great is the sum of them? If I shou'd count them, they are more in number than the sands; when I awake, I am still with thee. God's numberless thoughts of love and kindness were exceeding delightful to him in all his reflections upon them. He is the most amiable of all objects, and there is the noblest pleasure to be found in communion with him. It shou'd always be our choice and our delight to converse with him in Christ; and in all the perplexities and uneasinesses of our minds we shou'd think of his power to help us, of his love and grace, and of his covenant engagements to them that trust in him, to quiet and comfort us. In this way the psalmist found his solace: *When I said my foot slippeth, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up. In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.* And this was the support and comfort of the church, when her spirits were almost sunk with sorrows, *Lam. iii. 15—27.*

Pfal. xciv.
18, 19.

5. *It includes obedience to him.*

Pfal. xxii.
27.

Thus it is said, *All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall wor-*
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ship before thee. And to work righteousness, and remember God in his ways, are ^{Isa. lxiv. 5.} used as terms of the same import. In this manner *David remembered the name of the Lord, and kept his law.* ^{Pf. cxix. 55.} On the other hand, *the wicked that shall be turned into hell,* are said to *forget God.* ^{Pf. ix. 17.} While they go on in their iniquities, pursuing divers lusts and pleasures, they forsake the Lord, they cast his commands behind their backs, they forget his authority, and their obligations, his terrors and his grace.

But the soul that remembers God aright, would be for him and for no other: When it is conscious of sin, it repents, and bewails it before God, and returns to him thro' Christ for pardon and recovery; and when it is tempted to sin, it says with *Joseph, How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* ^{Gen. xxxix. 9.} It fears God, and is thereby restrained from evil, as *Nehemiah* was, *Nehem. v. 15.* It listens after the will of the Lord, saying with *Saul, in his way to Damascus, What wilt thou have me to do?* ^{Act. ix. 6.} It delights in the way of his statutes. It *remembers his commandments to do them.* ^{Pf. ciii. 18.} It makes them the subject of its thoughts, and the rule of its conduct; and lest it shou'd err from his precepts, and thereby dishonour his name, and bring confusion upon it
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self, it looks to him for guidance and assistance to carry it on in his way. Hence said the Psalmist, *Teach me thy way, O Lord, I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name. And cause me to know the way wherein I should walk, for I lift up my soul unto thee. Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God: thy spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness. Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's sake, &c.*

Pf. lxxxvi.
11. and
cxliii. 8,
10, 11.

Having thus briefly considered what it is to remember God, according to the discoveries he has made of himself to us, let us,

II. *Enter into some considerations, which our text and context may suggest, to enforce this remembrance of him now, and particularly on young people.* And oh that God would set them home upon your hearts to make them effectual! Let you and me look to him for a saving application.

I. *Consider God will bring you into Judgment.*

Young people are reminded of this in the next verse but one before our text. Eccl. xi. 9. *Rejoice O young man in thy youth.— But know thou that for all these things God*

God will bring thee into judgment. And he that knows this, shou'd surely think it the most important concern of all others to remember God now in the days of his youth. Great and small, young and old, must be brought before him into judgment. And thou who art not too young to sin, and to know that thou art a sinner, certainly art not too young to be judged, condemned, and punished for thy sins. If you don't regard God here, he will not regard you hereafter. If you *forget him*, Ps. l. 22. *he'll tear you in pieces, when there will be none to deliver.* If you cast off his fear, refuse his counsel, go on in sin, and reject his Christ, and the way of salvation thro' him, God will call thee to a strict and severe account for it; and this sermon, as well as all the other means of grace thou hast slighted, will rise up and witness against thee in the day of his awful judgment. And oh how dreadful will it be, if thou shouldst be found an impenitent, unbelieving, Christless sinner at his bar! 'Twould be superfluous to add more on this head, having pursued it at large in a former discourse *.

But there is hope in Christ for thee with relation to that judgment, if now thy heart is engaged to remember God according

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* See the sermon on Eccles. xi. 9. preached Dec. 25. 1728.

ding to gospel-discoveries of him, and is opened to attend to the things that are this day spoken to thee from the Lord. If now in thy youth, thy soul is inclined to wisdom, and thou art enabled so to remember God, as under a sense of thy guilt and danger, to seek his favour in Christ, to believe in him for the remission of thy sins, and to turn from them to God thro' him, thou shalt stand in judgment: None of thine iniquities shall be remembered against thee; thy judge will be thy friend; thou shalt appear with boldness before him, and be adjudged to eternal life. Oh then, as ever thou wouldst lift up thine head with joy in the great day of account, *remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.*

2. Consider this is the only way to *remove sorrow from thy heart, and to put away evil from thy flesh.*

Eccl. xi.
10.

This was spoken of in the beginning of the verse before our text. Young people are very apt to bring uneasinesses upon themselves by their own sin and folly, and then to be impatient under the mischiefs, which are the fruit of their own doings. They sin much, and can bear but little: Their passions are turbulent and tender: They can't govern them, and can't tell how to endure the sorrows of every kind
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they thereby entail upon themselves. Their youthful fleshly lusts war against their souls, and the members of their bodies are made instruments of unrighteousness. The evil of sin reigns in them; and the evil of diseases, of death and destruction become their punishments. Oh how many are the sorrows, and how ruinous are the evils, that the sin and folly of youth expose them to! What miseries and disquietudes mingle with their pleasures, and what bitterness is there in their end! While they forget God, all these evils grow upon them, and their dangers grow with them: They have no principles sufficient to remove these sorrows, or to put these evils away from them in this life; and have nothing to secure them against their dreadful effects and consequences in that which is to come.

But a remembrance of God in Christ, according to the gospel-revelation of him, is, by his grace, a happy and effectual means to remove all this sorrow from thine heart, O young man or woman, and to put away all this evil from thy flesh. This will prevent much sin and sorrow, as it leads thee to the blood of Christ for the pardon of thy sins, to a fund of strength and grace in him to enable thee to depart from them, and to the strongest motives and obli-

obligations to have no further fellowship with them, but to yield thy self to God. And with this removal of thy sins, thy sorrows will flee away. Here thou mayst find nobler pleasures than ever were tasted in the ways of sin: Here thy passions may be calmed and regulated: Here all the faculties of thy soul, and all the members of thy body, may be sanctified and possessed with honour: Here thy guilty conscience may be purged from dead works to serve the living God: Here some natural and all judicial punishment of sin may be prevented: Here thy spirit will be fortified to bear with patience other afflictions of life, that may befall thee under the management of thy covenant God and Father: And here thou wilt find a security against the sting of death, and against an eternal hell; and an open passage to immortal blessedness and glory. Oh then *remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth!*

3. Consider *childhood and youth are vanity.*

This is mentioned in the words immediately preceding our text. Vanity is there made a sort of characteristick of childhood and youth, as if it were a distinguishing vice of the tender age. Young people have

a natural levity of spirit, they want a ballast to poize them, to secure and make them useful. They please themselves with shadows instead of real substance : They don't discern the things that differ : They misplace their choice and their affections upon objects, that give an agreeable touch to the senses, or to the imagination, instead of turning them to those that approve themselves to judgment and conscience : They act under present impressions, and don't weigh the consequences of their conduct : They trifle in things that are most serious and important, and lay out all their vigour and activity in things that are trifling and injurious. They are naturally prone to *sinful* vanity, and while they indulge themselves in that, all their views and attainments are *unprofitable* vanity. They *walk in a vain shew* ; they *lift up their souls to vanity* ; they *conceive mischief, and bring forth vanity* ; they *love it, they trust in it, and weary themselves for very vanity*. Their pride and pleasures, their honours and enjoyments are vain and empty things ; they are all uncertain and unsatisfying, all perishing, hurtful, and deceiving ; they are trifling impertinencies ; they are not what they seem to be ; there is nothing in them ; and all that comes of them is vanity. And of all the vanities, that attend

Pf. xxxix.

6.
Pf. xxiv. 4.

and iv. 2.

Job xv.

31, 35.
Hab. ii.

13.

attend childhood and youth, there is none greater, for sinfulness and unprofitableness, than forgetfulness of God. This sums up all the rest, is fundamental to it, and involves them in it. And none of their vanity can be effectually cured, till they come to remember God so as to return to him; for *they that are far from him must perish.*

Pf. lxxiii.
27.

But a remembrance of God, in the way that has been mentioned, will remove the vanity of childhood and youth. This will give a solid turn to your judgments, consciences, and affections; this will regulate your choice; this will raise your views, and bring you acquainted with one, who *causes them that love him to inherit substance.*

Prov. viii.
21.

This will make you substantially wise and good, substantially honourable and happy, beyond all things else whatsoever. Hence *says God, by the prophet, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, who exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.* Or, according to new-testament language, *Let*

1 Cor. i.

29, 30, 31.

no flesh glory in his presence; for of him are

ye

ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

And as young minds are most liable to every kind of vanity, or to be vain in every thing, it shou'd be a special caution to them, to take heed that they are not caught in the dangerous snare, but that they remember God in order to their escaping it, or to their recovery from it. The time of youth is usually the making or marring time, for this world and the next. If you continue vain thro' all the days of your youth, you are never like, without wonderful grace, to be otherwise. Oh then *remember now thy creator, in the days of thy youth.*

4. Consider 'tis your *Creator* that demands your *remembrance of him*.

He may be mentioned under that character in our text, tho not to confine your remembrance to that single notion of God ; yet to enforce the duty of remembering him from that special consideration of him. Whom shou'd you remember, if not the God that made you, that preserves and upholds you, and has

been a kind and constant benefactor to load you with his benefits ; the God to whom you owe your all, and upon whom you depend for every thing ; the God in whose hands your very beings, and all your concerns are, who is able to save or to destroy you, to keep you alive or to kill you, to make you happy or miserable, in this world and for ever ? His creative authority admits of no dispute ; his glory must be supreme ; his right to all your highest regards must be uncontrollable. *Oh come let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our maker. Let us pay him all possible homage.*

Psal. xcv,
6.

Who can be worthy of your remembrance, if the God of uncreated infinite perfections, and the God of all creating powers, is not so ? Whom can it be so much your honour to remember as him, according to the discoveries he hath made of himself, in the works of nature, and of grace, for your duty and happiness, and for his own and his Son's glory ? Who can have so rightful and endearing a claim to your frequent meditations on him, faith and trust, delight and pleasure in him, and obedience to him, as God your Creator, who has likewise condescended to make himself known under farther characters of mercy and grace thro' a redeemer,

deemer, and who has done this in a way most suitable to your sinful fallen state, to invite and encourage, assist and own your remembrance of him? What good may you not hope for thro' Christ, and on his account, in the way of these religious regards to the great God that made you? And what evil may you not expect from his just resentment and indignation, if you go on to forget him? Who can be your friend, if he is your enemy? Or who can make you miserable, if the creator and governor of yourselves, and of all persons and causes whatsoever, will make you happy? *If this God be for you, who can* Rom. viii.
be against you? But if he speaks trouble, ^{31.}
 who is able to speak peace? *When he* Job xxxiv.
giveth quietness, who then can make trou- ^{29, 31, 32.}
ble? And when he hideth his face, who then can behold him? whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only. Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more. That which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more. Oh then remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.

5. Consider that now, in the days of your youth, is the season in which he demands this remembrance of him.

Remember him now, says our text : *Now*, without delay ; *now*, without putting it off one day, or one moment longer ; *now*, whilst he speaks to you ; *now*, while there is a mediator to recommend you to his favour ; *now*, while you have opportunities and gracious promises of assistance for it ; *now*, while you find any movings in your hearts towards it ; and *now*, while there is room to hope his grace approaches thee in Christ, whilst he awakens thy attention to him, convinces thee of thy neglects of him, of thy duty to him, of thy happiness or misery in his favour or in his wrath, and whilst he shews thee the grounds of thy acceptance with him in the beloved. *Behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.* And *to day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.* *Now*, whatever your age, your station, or your circumstances in life may be, *remember thy Creator now.* And in a very special manner, if you are yet in the bloom of your days, in the tender age of life, *remember him now in the days of your youth* : The sooner, the better ; it can't be too soon, but quickly may be too late. The sooner you remember him, the more time you will have in this world to glorify and delight in him, to taste the pleasures, to

2 Cor. vi.
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Heb. iii.
7, 8.

live the glories, and promote the interests of religion ; the more likely it will be that you shall find acceptance in it, the fitter you will be for it, and the better wrought and formed for the inheritance of the saints in light.

Now, in your youth, all the wit and sprightliness of your thoughts are in their vigour, their enticing objects spread numerous snares and dangers all around you, and their daring fallies inconsiderately rush into them : And how can they be better guarded, or be turned to better account, than by solemn thoughts of God as made known in his word ? *Wherewith shall a* Psal. cxix. *young man cleanse his way ? By taking heed⁹ thereto, according to thy word.* Now, in the days of your youth, the animal spirits are quick and lively : And how can they be better employed, than in fervent serving the Lord ? Now, in the days of your youth, your understandings are capable of great improvements : And how can they be better used, than in searching into the great things of God ? Now, in the days of your youth, your memories are strong and tenacious : And what better stores can they have, than the divine treasures of wisdom and knowledge ? Now, in the days of your youth, your affections are warm and active : And what so noble
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for their objects, as God and Christ, and the things that are above? Now, in the days of your youth, your time and thoughts are less incumber'd with other things: And what can be so desirable to fill up their vacancies, as the knowledge and service of God in Christ? And now, in the days of your youth, your bodies are in their growing strength and vigour: And when can they be so fitly presented to the Lord, for a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to him? Is not this now your reasonable service? How excellent and beautiful are all these natural advantages of youth, when sanctified by the grace of God! And what pity is it, that they shou'd be spent in the service of sin, to the dishonour of his name, to the injury of others, and to your own destruction! Oh then remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.

Rom. xii.
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6. And lastly, Consider that if you pass the time of youth without remembering him, you may never have another, and never will have so fit an one afterwards for it.

This consideration is urged at length in the close of the verse where our text is, and so on to the seventh verse. Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw

drow nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.—Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God, who gave it. The sum of the argument which is enforced in these, and the intermediate verses, with a great variety of strong and beautiful metaphors, is this: “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the days of sickness, old age, and death come.” The two first of these will be very unfit seasons for this work; and the last will put an utter end to all opportunities for it. Are none of these evil days yet come upon you, who are still in your health and youth? *Remember thy Creator now*; for all these evil days draw nigh unto thee. Sickness and death may be just at the door, young and healthful as thou art. They may be nearer than thou art aware; and oh what evil days will they be to thee, if they come upon thee while thou art far from God, out of Christ, unmindful of him, estranged from him, and at enmity with him!

If sickness meet thee in this state, the remembrance of God will be very dreadful to thee then. Have none of you ever found it so when you have been laid on beds of illness, and death
hath

hath stared you in the face ? Hast thou never known a time when thy flesh and heart were failing together ? Hast thou never, in the near views of eternity, trembled at the thoughts of lanching into a dark and unknown world, and of being immediately called to answer for all thy sins, before the great judge of the universe ? Oh what wouldst thou have given for an interest in Christ, for reconciliation with God, and a security for heaven then ! Such awful days, sirs, will certainly come again ; they will come and do the work, which thou then wert only afraid of ; and thou shalt never return back from them to life any more.

But supposing thou never hast hitherto known what it is to be under sickness, and to have a sentence of death within thy self ; yet the sick and dying time will soon be thine. God only knows how soon. And oh how wilt thou lament and bewail it, that thou forgottest him till then ! What terror and amazement ; what guilt, and fear, and anguish of heart, will every thought of God almighty, of an incensed, righteous, holy, sin-avenging God, be attended with then ! How will thy conscience then throb within, and reproach thee for thy sin and folly, in forgetting him all the days of thy youth and health

health before ! How wilt thou be oppressed with the load, the faintings, the pain and the tremblings of the distemper itself, and with the agonies of a disturbed and wounded spirit ! How unfit to think of God and Christ, with any fixedness and composure, or to any good purpose ! And how unapt to take any encouragement from his grace thro' a redeemer, or to make a free, solemn, and sincere surrender of thy self to him.

And if death executes its commission upon thee, before thou art savingly acquainted with God, or interested in his Son, what a doleful day of evil will that be ! Thou art lost and gone for ever ; gone from all that amused and pleased thee here ; gone to the dismal abodes of darkness, horror and despair, past all help or hope for ever ; gone to remember God with amazing dread in another world, whom thou never wouldst remember with delight in this ; and gone, to remember all thy former forgetfulness of him, and to feel his fiery indignation for it. Oh remember God, according to the gracious discoveries he has made of himself in Christ now, before these evil days come upon you.

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But perhaps thou flatterest thy self with the hopes of long life, and therefore thinkest it time enough to remember God many years hence. Well, let us for once make the uncertain supposition. Admit that sickness should not break thy constitution, and death should not cut off thy life in the days of thy youth ; yet the evil days of old age, with all its attending infirmities, will unavoidably creep upon thee ; and all thou canst pretend to offer to God then, will be but a weak and withered, a dull and lifeless, a lame and blind sacrifice. And is that all you would give to God in the remembrance of him ? How base and ungrateful, how unreasonable and provoking is this ! how canst thou expect he will accept it at thy hands, who wouldst not consent that he should have it till it was good for just nothing at all ? Is this dealing with him like a God ; or with thy self like a rational creature ? Or is it depending on the Mediator in a way suitable to his design, who came to save his people from their sins, that he might deliver them from the wrath to come ?

Oh then now, before any of these evil days draw nigh ; now, whilst thou art in thine health and youth, in the strength
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and vigour of thine age; *remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.* Remember how thou hast sinned against him, and what obligations thou art under to return to him: Remember with what repenting, self-abasing sorrows of heart thou shouldst do it for all thine iniquities, and all thy neglects of God, and his Christ hitherto: Remember the necessity and advantage of thy return to him, thro' an atoning and interceding Mediator: Remember what rich encouragements he has given thee in Christ to it by the gospel: Remember what grace is with him, to enable thee to come to him: And remember to seek his favour in the beloved, with a dependance on that grace, and in hopes of his mercy. Let him be often in thy thoughts: Let thy soul make out to him thro' Christ, in a way of faith and trust in him, till thou findest thou canst remember him with delight, and art enabled to hope, with humble confidence in him, and to yield up thy self to him, as his obedient servant all thy days. May God himself incline and enable thee, by his spirit and grace, thus to *remember him now in the days of thy youth.*

F I N I S.

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